

DENTISTRY & YOGA



Lori Kemmet, DDS, LVIM

TOOLS FOR HEALTH

Living in a toxic world does not mean that we have to be toxic. We are the pilots of our existence. We are also the co-pilots of other's existence and can help them make choices toward health. As a student of dentistry and yoga it has become a passion to help others realize their optimal health. Disease of the body is the tipping point of toxicity that presents in both the physical and mental. So where does yoga fit in with dentistry? As dentists how would yoga benefit us personally and how would it assist those we influence?

Yoga brings physical space, flexibility and mental breath to a world of form. If inflammation and a toxic world of free radicals are unavoidable why not explore options to minimize contact with them and their effect on us. People want options when they are present for our examinations. I wonder how many have been presented (by dentists) with options for total body health? Could we be the one to offer health and prevent or slow the process to the tipping point of disease? Could yoga be a tool to help unravel the instability that presents itself to you on a daily basis?

Inflammation

The biological mechanism of linking periodontitis to systemic inflammation is not to be debated. We recommend to our patients to floss daily. It's a choice we make daily for more or less inflammation. Are we giving our patients the choice to upgrade overall physical and mental performance by offering solutions within dentistry and for physical integrity? Are we looking at constitutional core strength when our patients present, not only initially but also at recurring intervals? Are we offering choices like yoga and NM dentistry? Forward head posture, scoliosis, torticollis, tinnitus, back pain, TMD, rheumatoid arthritis, eczema and cancer are all responses to a system in toxic overload. Inflammation presents itself with many different labels. Is it our responsibility to look at the entire body as it presents? I say yes.

Muscular disharmony as it relates to the head and neck is our region. However, the imbalance travels all the way down to the feet. Imagine offering yoga as a way to enhance muscle integrity, harmony, flexibility and balance. Offering a home sleep study screening to the person who presents with an Epworth of seven and oxygen saturation of 94% is common practice for most of us who are informed through our training at LVI. It's a tool we reach for when sleep apnea is present. Imagine reaching for the tool of yoga for quieting the mind prior to sleep or as a tool to establish muscular harmony. The physical forms presented to us every day are toxic. Are we helping to uncover toxic load (inflammation) or asleep in our profession of responsibility? Are we offering NM dentistry and options like yoga for re-establishing muscular balance?

Yoga

- *Can you stand upright and remove your shoe while standing on the other foot?*
- *Can you remain standing and put it back on?*
- *Can you stand, bend over with a flat back and touch the floor?*
- *Can you do one push up?*

Yoga will show you your limitations and simultaneously provide you with the tool to move beyond them. Most body types do not remain supple throughout a lifetime. As a person who practices yoga I have seen a transformation in my own physical and mental form and in those around me. Yoga brings foundation, balance, muscle integrity and length. Poses like cobra, mountain, and forward fold have a lot going on in them. These poses guide us into a state of alignment after a day of doing dentistry. Add in the mental benefits of quieting the mind during the practice and we realize that yoga is not just for the body, it is for the mind as well.



"Add in the mental benefits of quieting the mind during the practice and we realize that yoga is not just for the body, it is for the mind as well."





Try different yoga styles (Ashtanga, Vinyasa, Iyengar, Forrest, Kundalini) and choose different instructors.

Getting caught up in the class about the pose next to you and perfecting the pose is a sure way to find yourself injured. Yoga is personal and is an opportunity to reflect inward toward your own unique practice. I personally like Vinyasa, Yin and Forrest. My ultimate yoga day incorporates a Vinyasa or Forrest class (flowing movement) followed by a Yin class (restful and restorative). It may be the style of yoga that you dislike the most that you most need. Locate a studio that is convenient and offers several styles. There is nothing like yoga to wrap up a day in the office.

Integration

The body is our laboratory that we carry with us until the last breath. Why not choose to be mentally and physically flexible? Consider living a lifestyle that encourages ease in the body, not disease. We have all exposed ourselves to toxicity knowingly and unknowingly. The inflammatory process can be minimized by making compassionate choices, both for our own bodies and for those trusting in our care. Consider exploring the benefits of yoga for yourself and then share your excitement with your patients. Don't be an unhealed healer. It's a little reminiscent of the dentist with an ugly smile trying to sell veneers or the cardiologist who is grossly overweight.

If you are talking about health, represent health!

Dentistry and Yoga are our tools.